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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/263,311	03/08/1999	JOHN J. KORMAN		1666

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EXAMINER

SINGH, RAMNANDAN P

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2644

DATE MAILED: 08/09/2004

17

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/263,311

Applicant(s)

KORMAN ET AL.

Examiner

Ramnandan Singh

Art Unit

2644

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 20 May 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 3-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 3-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 26 September 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments filed on 20 May 2004 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.
2. On page 2, line 6 (Applicant's response), "U.S. Patent No. **6,447,248** B1 to Bruhnke" is in error. The correct no. is "U.S. Patent No. **6,477, 248** B1 to Bruhnke".

Status of Claims

3. Claims 1 and 2 are cancelled.
Claims 3-24 are pending.

Drawings

4. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). Claim 3 recites the limitation "the disabling mechanism includes one or more **insulating plugs** insertable into at least one of the normally-closed contacts" on page 2. Since the claimed "improved terminal block" is based on a mechanical arrangement (or structure), the mechanical arrangement (or structure) of the **insulating plug** must be shown. As a result, claim 3 has not been illustrated. A similar thing holds for claims 6, 12, 23, 24.

Further, claim 13 recites "**third and fourth connection mechanisms**" in 3rd line. The third and fourth connection mechanisms to connect third and fourth service providers to a customer are not shown. A similar thing holds for claims 14-17, 22-23.

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The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the mechanical structure of the disabling mechanism including one or more insulating plugs and third and fourth connection mechanisms must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

6. Claims 1-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Admitted Prior Art (APA) [Applicant's Fig. 1].

Regarding claim 3, the APA teaches a terminal block (100) for connecting a customer with a **single telecommunications service provider**, the block comprising:

a connection mechanism (100) which, when not disabled, connects the customer (i.e. **Tip 134, Ring 136**) to a service provider (i.e. **Tip 130 and Ring 132**);

a disabling mechanism for disabling the connection mechanism,

wherein the connection mechanism includes normally-closed contacts, **134, 136, 138, 140**, and the disabling mechanism includes one or more insulating plugs insertable into at least one of the normally-closed contacts, , so as to disable the connection mechanism [Applicant's Fig. 1; Specification, Pages 2-3].

Although this stand-alone connection mechanism (100) is for connecting a customer to

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a single service provider, this is nevertheless a teaching to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply the identical connection mechanism to connect the same customer to a second service provider also.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to repeat the single connection mechanism in series with the first connection mechanism to connect the customer to a second service provider so as to provide a customer with a choice to select any one of the telecommunications service providers available in the market.

Claim 4 is essentially similar to claim 3 except for normally-closed contacts. The connection mechanism (100) comprises a first normally-closed contact 134 in series between a first terminal 102 and a second terminal 118, and a second normally-closed contact 136 in series between a third terminal 104 and a fourth terminal 120.

Regarding claim 5, as discussed above, the second connection mechanism is a copy of the first connection mechanism. The APA (Applicant's Fig. 1) further teaches how to connect any one of identical connection mechanisms to a customer premises. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to connect a customer to a second connection mechanism.

Regarding claim 6, the APA teaches a disabling mechanism including removable insulating plugs which are insertable into any of the normally-closed contacts 134, 136, 238 and 140 shown in Fig. 1 [Applicant's Spec. page 2].

Regarding claim 7, the APA teaches terminal block 100 wherein each of respective pairs of first and third terminals, (102), (104) of the first connection mechanism shown in Fig. 1, are connected to corresponding incoming twisted-pair telephone lines (Tip(130), Ring(132)) from a first telecommunications service provider [Fig. 1]. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to connect a second telecommunications service provider to a second connection mechanism similar to the first connection mechanism.

Regarding claim 8, the APA teaches a connection mechanism for a single service provider Fig. 1]. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to repeat the single connection mechanism in series with the first connection mechanism to connect the customer to a second service provider so as to provide a customer with a choice to select any one of the two telecommunications. When two identical connection mechanisms (100) are connected in series to connect two service providers, the limitations of claim 8 are met.

Regarding claim 9, the APA teaches the terminal block (100) wherein the outgoing twisted-pair telephone lines (i.e. **Tip (143), Ring(136))** are routed to a customer premises [Fig. 1].

Regarding claims 10 and 11, the APA teaches the terminal block (100) wherein the outgoing twisted-pair telephone lines (i.e. **Tip (143), Ring(136))** are routed to a customer premises through ancillary equipment (170) configured to provide a local loop [Fig. 1].

Regarding claim 12, the limitations have been discussed above (see claim 3).

Regarding claim 13, the configuration of the third and fourth connection mechanisms are similar to that of the first and second connection mechanisms as discussed above (see claim 3).

Regarding claim 14, the limitations have already shown above (see claim 4).

Regarding claim 15, the limitation has been discussed above (see claim 5).

Regarding claim 16-22, the limitations are shown above (see claims 8-11).

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Regarding claim 23, the APA teaches a connection mechanism for connecting a single telecommunications service provider. This is nevertheless a teaching to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply the identical connection mechanism to connect the same customer to third and fourth service providers.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to apply the single connection mechanisms [APA: Fig. 1] to generate a new terminal block to accommodate two or more telecommunications service providers, and thereafter provide a selection combination using disabling mechanisms to select any one of the service providers subject to circuit, system and design constraints.

Regarding claim 24, the limitation has been shown above (see claim 6).

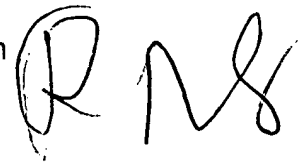
Conclusion

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ramnandan Singh whose telephone number is (703)308-6270. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F(8:00-4:30).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Forester Isen can be reached on (703)-305-4386. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Ramnandan Singh
Examiner
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A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large capital 'R' followed by a stylized 'N' and 'S'.